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Description:

Islamic peoples account for one fifth of the world's population and yet there is widespread misunderstanding in the West of what Islam really is. Francis Robinson and his team set out to address this, revealing the complex and sometimes contrary nature of Muslim culture.

As well as taking on the issues uppermost in everyone's minds, such as the role of religious and political fundamentalism, they demonstrate the importance of commerce; literacy and learning; Islamic art; the effects of immigration, exodus, and conquest; and the roots of current crises in the Middle East, Bosnia, and the Gulf. Throughout, emphasis is placed on the interaction between Islam and the West, from the first Latin translations of the Quran to the fatwa on Salman Rushdie.

This elegant book deliberately sets out to dismantle the Western impression of Islam as a monolithic world and replace it with a balanced view, from current issues of fundamentalism to its dynamic culture and art. Francis Robinson is the editor of two outstanding reference works: *Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500* (Cambridge, 1982) and *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India* (1989).